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## **BAUCUS URGES APPROVAL OF FIVE TRADE, TAX COURT NOMINEES**

*Finance Chair Says Nominees Will Advance Trade Agenda to Help Create Jobs, Ensure Fair Application of Tax Law*

**Washington, DC** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today urged the conformation of five nominees: Joseph Gale to be a U.S. Tax Court Judge; Michael Punke to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative; Islam Siddiqui to be Chief Agricultural Negotiator in the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR); Paul Piquado to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Import Administration; and David Johanson to be a Member of the United States International Trade Commission (USITC). Baucus said the four trade nominees will help create jobs and boost the economy by advancing the nation's trade agenda, and added that Gale, who has been nominated for a second term, will continue to ensure justice and give taxpayers a voice on the Tax Court.

**"By moving our trade agenda, we will open foreign markets to American products and boost our economy, but we must do so in a manner that puts American jobs first,"** said Baucus. **"As Ambassador to the World Trade Organization and Deputy United States Trade Representative, Michael Punke will work to open fast-growing international markets, so American ranchers, farmers and businesses can seize new export opportunities and create jobs here at home. Islam Siddiqui will ensure our farmers and ranchers are able to sell their high-quality products around the world and that our trading partners don't erect unscientific barriers blocking our goods in his role as Chief Agricultural Negotiator in the Office of the United States Trade Representative. As Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Import Administration, Paul Piquado will protect American jobs and commerce by enforcing the antidumping and countervailing duty laws that prevent other countries from trading unfairly. As a Commissioner at the United States International Trade Commission, David Johanson will enforce the intellectual property rights and trade laws that help our innovative manufacturers and workers compete. Judge Joseph Gale has served admirably in his first term as a U.S. Tax Court Judge and will continue to see that our tax laws are applied fairly and consistently."**

At the hearing, Baucus spoke with the four trade nominees about the importance of using international trade to create jobs in the United States and help our economy grow. He asserted the need to pass the pending trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama, along with a renewal of the Trade Adjustment Assistance job-training program, so the American workforce is fully equipped to take advantage of that access as we open new markets. Baucus also discussed the roles that each of the four trade nominees will play in advancing our trade agenda in their new positions.

Michael Punke, a Missoula, Montana resident and former University of Montana adjunct professor, has worked in the international trade field for two decades, including as Senior Policy Advisor to the USTR from 1995 to 1996. He was Director for International Economic Affairs in the Clinton Administration from 1993 to 1995, and he served on both the National Security Council and National Economic Council. Punke is a graduate of The George Washington University and Cornell Law School. He has served as Deputy United States Trade Representative since his recess appointment in 2010. Once confirmed, Punke will continue his work opening critical markets to U.S. exports by guiding the United States in the ongoing Doha negotiations.

Islam Siddiqui served in the Agriculture Department during the Clinton Administration as a Senior Trade Advisor and as Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, where he worked alongside USTR in agricultural trade negotiations. More recently, he was the Vice President for Science and Regulatory Affairs at CropLife America. He has served as USTR's Chief Agricultural Negotiator since his recess appointment in 2010. Once confirmed, Siddiqui will work to advance the interests of American farmers and ranchers in the global marketplace. Siddiqui is a graduate of Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University in Pantnagar, India, and holds both a Masters and Doctorate from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

Paul Piquado is currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Policy and Negotiations in the Import Administration at the Commerce Department, a position he has held since early 2010. For five years prior, Piquado was the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Office of Trade Policy, advising Governor Ed Rendell on trade matters. He also served, during that time, as an advisor to USTR's Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee on Trade. Piquado earned a Bachelor's degree from Williams College, a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Tufts University Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy and a law degree from New York University. As Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Import Administration, Piquado will develop policies that help counter unfair foreign trade practices that have a negative effect on American interests.

David Johanson has been a member of the minority trade staff of the Senate Finance Committee since 2003. Johanson previously worked for Congressmen George Radanovich and Wally Herger and Senator Phil Gramm. He attended Stanford University, earned a Master's degree from Cambridge University and a law degree from the University of Texas. The USITC informs Congress and the Executive Branch on trade matters, investigates the effects of trade policies on American industries and adjudicates trade-related cases involving imports and intellectual property rights.

If confirmed, Gale will serve a second 15-year term on the U.S. Tax Court, where he will continue to hear tax law-related cases and provide taxpayers a venue to dispute IRS claims before having to make payments. Gale served as Staff Director and Chief Tax Counsel on the Senate Finance Committee immediately prior to his initial appointment to the Tax Court and advised Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan on tax issues between 1985 and 1992. Gale is a graduate of Princeton University and holds a law degree from the University of Virginia.

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